



# *Mimulus* **MEMO**

**California Native Plant Society**  
**Kern County Chapter**  
Winter 2006

## **THANKS, MANY THANKS!**

Article and photo for CNPS Bulletin- Debby Kroger

September Meeting Hospitality- Linda Cooley, Sasha Honig, Debby Kroger, Laura Stockton  
September Meeting Speaker- Linda Bliss

Turkey Vulture Festival Table- Marya Miller, Lucy Clark, Steve Hampson

Plant Sale-DEBBY KROGER for her organizing, ordering, fetching, etc, etc, etc!  
Karen Meeks, Linda Burgess, Allene Krizo, Steve Hampson, Lucy Clark, Lorraine and Arthur Unger,  
Denis Kearns, Laura Stockton, Marya Miller, Harriet Morris, Gordon Nipp, Randy Mc Cormick

Annual Potluck- Gordon and Eva Nipp for being wonderful hosts once again, Ellen Cypher for her interesting talk and photos on the recovery of endangered plants in the SJV

## **President's Message**

A happy and native plant-filled new year to all!

We had a great year for our chapter in 2006, with many wonderful field trips, 5 meetings, our second year of scholarships to middle and high school students who were winners of the Plant Biology sections at the Kern County Science Fair, our Plant Sale, and with planning for our future. I hope you will help us make 2007 an even better year for California native plants by bringing your ideas for making the Kern Chapter an even stronger advocate for our native flora. Thank you for your dedication and support!

I attended the CNPS Chapter Council meeting at UC Berkeley the second weekend in December and returned fired up with the possibilities for our Kern Chapter, and our state-wide California Native Plant Society. I want to share with you a bit of what went on during the marathon 9 hour meeting. First, we were one of 11 out of the 34 chapters which were acknowledged for increasing our membership numbers. (Good going, and ask more of your friends or colleagues to join!) Earlier in the year all agreed to try to increase our membership by 20 percent. I heard great ideas from other chapters that we intend to try this year in order to reach our target.

We also were informed that our new web site is up and running, so be sure to explore [www.CNPS.org](http://www.CNPS.org). It looks really good, and seems much more helpful. Two representatives gave an up-date on CalFlora and their plan to work with individual Chapters producing local floras for use on line. What a treat it would be to check their web-site for a list and a map before a trip to see Aunt Sue, and get in some botanizing at the same time! Peruse [www.calflora.org](http://www.calflora.org) for their beautiful photos and the first local flora designed in conjunction with the Marin Chapter.

The hot and heavy discussions concerned the development of CNPS weeds and herbicide policies. More hot and heavy discussion will continue at following meetings, as a consensus develops. If you are interested in reading this last draft and entering the fray, please contact Larry Levine at [levinl@northcoast.com](mailto:levinl@northcoast.com). Other happenings of note, and there were many, will appear in your CNPS Bulletin.

Kern Chapter is moving closer and closer to beginning significant new projects in the new year, which we are sure you will want to join! Within these pages you will find our plans, so read on! -Lucy Clark

## SPRING PROGRAMS/CHAPTER MEETINGS

### January 16 - Weeds and What to Do About Them

Eddy Greynolds is the Agricultural Biologist for the Kern County Department of Agriculture & Measurement Standard. He is also the lead person for the Kern Weed Management Area, which is a partnership of 24 member organizations working against noxious weeds. Eddy will give us an update on the status of weeds in our county, the appropriate and legal ways to deal with them, and what not to plant in your garden, among other things. We hope to use his information when we tackle weeds growing in local preserves.

### February 20 - The Wildflowers of the Olympic Peninsula

Denis Kearns, Botanist for the BLM's Bakersfield District, and member of our chapter, will describe and show us his beautiful photos of wildflowers. Denis is authoring the *Cucurbitaceae* section of The Flora of North America in his "spare" time. The flora is an effort of more than 850 botanists who are trying to record our "biological heritage" before it gets paved over. Maybe we can ask him questions about that, too!

### March 20 - The Rare Plants of the Southern Sierra

Fletcher Linton, Botanist for the Sequoia National Forest, will give the wonderful illustrated talk he gave the Chapter Council meeting last summer in Ridgecrest. He has flowers, he has maps, he will take us from Porterville over the Sierras to the desert! This will definitely get you out on field trips this spring.

*All meetings will be held on the first floor meeting room at the Beale Library, 701 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield. Plant keying and socializing will start at 6pm (see below) and the meeting will begin at 7pm. We will finish by 8:30 to 8:45pm, as we have to clean up and be out by 9pm, when the library closes. Hope to see you all there for these opportunities to socialize, practice keying and hear the pros speak on their areas of expertise. We look forward to seeing you!*

***Something New:** If we can find anything blooming, we will try and have a mini plant-keying workshop before each meeting. Nothing elaborate, just a copy of Jepson and TwisselMoe and a plant or two that we have already identified. Then we can run the plants through the key, secure in the knowledge that we will get the right answer if we can justify making the correct key-split choices. So put a hand lens in your pocket if you think of it and we can do a little practice keying before the meeting.*

### Contest! Contest! Contest!

In anticipation of exotic alien plants (weeds) appearing after December's rains, Kern Chapter plans to expand our weed removal activities. Last year we worked with a Boy Scout to help remove Sahara Mustard from The Sand Ridge Preserve. Forty-one garbage bags were removed on one Sunday! Most CNPS chapters have dedicated groups which arm themselves with hoes, shovels, gloves, etc to take out the competition with our California native plants. Hopefully this activity will appeal to some of you for your own reasons: your love of native plants, your commitment to local preserves, your need to release your hostility in a socially acceptable way, etc. But first, we need a name for our band of eradicators! This is your mission: invent a name for this group! In one chapter, it is called the Weed Whackers, in another, The Wacky Weed Whackers, in another, The Weed Warriors. You get it! There will be a prize for the name chosen by a secret (because it is yet unformed) selection committee. The prize is also unknown at this time, but there will be one! Send your submissions to Lucy at [lucyg391@gmail.com](mailto:lucyg391@gmail.com), or call 391-9302.

### Sand Ridge Weed Removal

We will start our first weed pulling event at the Sand Ridge Preserve on Sunday, January 21<sup>st</sup> at 1:30pm. We will pull Sahara Mustard (*Brassica Tournefortii*) for about 3 hours, then adjourn for a pizza, tacos, ? afterwards, for those who have time. Remember to wear layers, bring water and gloves, and maybe a hoe. If you have giant plastic trash bags, and can spare a few, bring those too!

Sahara Mustard is an invasive species which threatens to take over the Preserve, and crowd out the desert plants which grow there. We hope to remove this mustard every month during the rainy season as new plants sprout. It takes advantage of any rain it receives, and plants present can be in the rosette stage up to three feet tall. Of course we want to get them out before they produce seeds.

Meet at the Taco Bell on the southeast corner of Hwy 58 and Hwy 184 (Weedpatch Hwy) at 1:30pm, and we'll car pool/convoy to the Preserve. We will sign release forms for the Preserve Manager before we start work. See you there!

## Planning for Field Trips

by Lucy Clark

Every year I think it would be fun if CNPS members who live outside of Bakersfield could take us to some of their favorite local wild flowering sites. Tehachapi members could take us on a Tehachapi hike or drive, Isabella members to local sites, Frazier Park and Lake of the Woods members could take us to their best spots. The higher elevations would give us opportunities to schedule trips at later dates. Note: you would **not** be expected to know all the plants or even lead a hike if you don't want to. Just take us somewhere interesting. We could develop lists of plants for each area. What do you think, those of you who live in the far reaches of our county? It would give all of us another chance to get together (besides the busy Plant Sale) and to learn the plants of various parts of our Kern County. Two or three of you from each area could get together and decide on a cool trip, and contact me with a date, time and meeting place in your area. ([lucyg391@gmail.com](mailto:lucyg391@gmail.com) or 661.391.9302).

I will pass your info on to whomever steps up to take on arranging field trips this year, as I am giving up this post. I think if several people volunteered to form a committee to schedule trips, it would take less effort than it has taken me to plan them by myself for the last six years. Live and learn! Please contact Steve Hampson or me to volunteer to serve on this committee. Thank you!

## 2007 Kern County Regional Science Fair Judging

We are seeking qualified judges for the Kern County Regional Science Fair, March 21, 2007 in order to accommodate the large number of student participants anticipated. You can help in two ways: first, by volunteering to serve as a judge and second, by recruiting others. Serving as a science fair judge is a rewarding experience that will take little of your valuable time. The Judge Information Form also can be found on the following web address: <http://ci.kern.org/sciencefoundation>. For further information on science fair judging, contact Bob Allison at 661-872-2719 or [rallison@bak.rr.com](mailto:rallison@bak.rr.com), or Anne Santer at 661-636-4640 or [ansanter@kern.org](mailto:ansanter@kern.org).

**The Carrizo Plain National Monument Advisory Committee will be meeting on Saturday, January 27 at the Carrisa Elementary School on Highway 58. The school is located approximately 2 miles northwest of the Soda Lake Road turnoff on Hwy. 58. The meeting runs from 10:00 to 5:00 pm. Please bring your own sack lunch. There will be a public comment period from 3 to 4 pm Ellen Cypher is our local representative on this committee.**

## BOOK REVIEW

**Care & Maintenance of Southern California Native Plant Gardens**

by Bart O'Brien, Betsy Landis, Ellen Mackey

**ON SALE AT OUR MEETINGS!**

This is an excellent book for exactly what the title says "care and maintenance". It is not filled with glossy photographs or fancy prose, instead, it concentrates on getting the information to you so you can use it. It is a reference book that many of you will find very helpful.

This book seems to cover everything. There is an excellent section on watering, including a plant list based on water use. The pruning section is also very good, not only does it tell you how to prune, but gives specific instructions for many different plants. Pests problems are covered both for weed pests and animal pests. Management methods are given for both in detail. The book also discusses soil conditions, how to plant and when to plant. There is a special section on planting in areas prone to wildfires. This book is printed both in Spanish and English, all in the same volume.

Though we do not always consider Bakersfield to be part of "Southern" California, I think that this book comes as close as you can to addressing the needs of our area. Just about anyone, expert or novice, would benefit from looking at this book.

Stephen Cooley

## Kern Chapter CNPS, September 2006

Kern CNPS held a Landscape Design workshop that informed attendees on how to assess their yard for the proper selection of native California plants. More than 40 backyard gardeners and native plant enthusiasts listened and learned as Linda Bliss, local free-lance landscape architect and CNPS member, guided them, step-by-step, through a site evaluation. Linda's outline included soil and water testing, sun and wind exposure and consideration for backyard use by children, friends and pets. Discussion about special considerations for fire areas and borrowed landscapes had particular interest due to current wildfires raging just to the south. Linda's explanation of scientific names gave insight into how to read and understand the plant label applied to nursery containers. The workshop continued twice as long as scheduled because participants were eager to gain more information and ask specific questions.

The workshop was scheduled to prepare the prospective native plant buyers for Kern's annual plant sale coming up on October 21st. Both the workshop and sale are held at the California Living Museum (CALM), California's premier native zoo and garden.

Armed with graph paper, new insight and inspiration, plus book and website resources participants left ready to go home and prepare a site plan for their garden areas!

## In The Field

The wildflower shows of spring and summer were long gone, but a few summer hold-outs were still blooming (eg California Fuchsia) and the fall-bloomers (eg rabbit brush) were going strong, so a drive up the canyon was still rewarding. But that wasn't why we were there; we were collecting seeds! We have been discussing the possibility of our Kern CNPS chapter growing native plants for some time now, but unresolved details like where to do it and who would do it have slowed down progress. However, we have now approached BARC about a joint venture, since they have a nursery area, and are waiting to see how that turns out. In the meantime it was a good excuse to get out in the field to scout around for local seed sources and collect a few seeds. (A quick call to the Forest Service confirmed that we do not need to get an official permit to collect a few seeds in the national forest.) We went up Rancheria Rd. in mid September and saw plenty of ripe seeds of Gray/Digger pine, Coffeeberry, Elderberry and Mountain mahogany, and almost-ripe acorns of Valley, Black, Blue and Interior Live Oaks. We also saw developing fruit of Buckeye and California Bay. So it looks like that is a good area for local seed collection. In early November we went up Kern Canyon to check on the California Bay trees above Richbar. We hit it just right as the fruit were ripe and beginning to drop. Likewise for Buckeye and Interior Live Oak. One surprise was how large the oaks were. While Interior Live Oak is a proper tree further north (var. *Wislizenii*), it is generally a xerophytic shrub around here (var. *frutescens*). But in Kern Canyon they were large trees. Twisselmann actually comments on that noting that the large trees in Kern Canyon are "probably only robust forms of the shrubby variety responding to very favorable soil, climatic or moisture conditions". (It makes you wonder if some of the shrubby ones are actually the robust variety responding to the lack of moisture and favorable soil...). In any event, we got some acorns in case those trees are genetically different (more robust), and they are probably the oaks growing closest to Bakersfield. They are reported to grow a couple feet a year in good conditions, so they seem a reasonable possibility for cultivation in addition to Valley and Black oaks. The oaks, bay and Gray Pine we collected are in cold storage at the moment, but are ready to go if we get the go-ahead at BARC.

So, the idea of a Kern CNPS native plant nursery continues to percolate. If you are interested in this project, please get in touch with Lucy. It is still pretty much "just an idea" at this point, but could be a lot of fun and an opportunity to learn more about native plant cultivation. And the more people that are interested and involved, the greater the chance that it will actually happen. Our goal is to grow locally collected cuttings and seeds for our own CNPS sale and perhaps for use along the Kern River Parkway. They are committed to landscaping the parkway with native plants, but some desirable species such as California Bay are often unavailable, and the available native species might come from anywhere in California or beyond.



## The Plane Truth (abridged version)

From: <http://www.botgard.ucla.edu/html/membgnewsletter/Volume5number2/Speakingtheplanettruth.html>

Mildred E. Mathias Botanical Garden, Newsletter (UCLA)

ARTHUR C. GIBSON

Plane trees are members of *Platanus*, the only genus in the plane tree family (Platanaceae). At present experts recognize about eight species plus an interspecific hybrid, although the number of published scientific names of extant species exceeds seventy. In our country there are three native species: *P. occidentalis*, called the sycamore, buttonball tree, or the American plane tree; *P. wrightii*, the Arizona sycamore; and *P. racemosa*, the California or western sycamore. Forms of all of these species also occur in Mexico, as do several other currently recognized species, *P. chiapensis*, *P. oaxacana*, and *P. rzedowskii*. At least two other species are indigenous to Eurasia, including the highly variable oriental plane tree, *P. orientalis*, and a very bizarre, fully evergreen species with narrowly elliptic leaves, *P. kerrii*, discovered in tropical forests of Laos and Vietnam. *Platanus orientalis* is a native of southern Eurasia from west central Italy eastward to Persia.

The London plane tree is the popular interspecific hybrid, widely cultivated from the Avenue des Champs-Élysées to Bruin Walk. *Platanus x acerifolia*-elsewhere called *P. hybrida*, *P. hispanica*, and *P. intermedia*-was long suspected, and is now confirmed with DNA analysis, to have arisen as a cross between *P. orientalis* of Eurasia and *P. occidentalis* of eastern North America. Allegedly from a fruit obtained from Montpellier, the original parent was probably grown at the Oxford Botanic Garden in England during the 18th century, and was first named by Aiton in 1789. Other interspecific hybrids have been created within the genus.

So commonly cultivated in Southern California are *Platanus x acerifolia* and *P. racemosa* that anyone interested in horticulture should be trained to recognize each type. California sycamore is most easily identified when its leaves have five long, distinct lobes extending more than half the length of the blade; blades are 10 to 20 centimeters long and slightly wider, although occasionally you may find a leaf greater than 30 centimeters across. The fruit heads of *P. racemosa* are formed most often in zigzag chains of fours, fives, and sixes-the specific epithet describes this chain of heads but, in reality, is a misnomer because the structure is not a true raceme. The fused stipules, which generally persist during the growing season at each node, look like miniature leaves several centimeters wide, often with teeth like the foliage leaves, but I have seen these up to six centimeters wide. Their bark characteristically is chalky white to dark gray and exfoliates in fairly large patches, but bark features vary too much for generalizations. A small minority of the specimens tends to have leaves with mostly three lobes that are indented less than half the length of the blade. MEMBG has one California sycamore specimen having leaves with only three lobes and pendent inflorescences with only three fruit heads. *Platanus racemosa* often grows taller than 25 meters. Landscape architects sometimes favor planting this species in informal woodlands and to lean slightly, because, when it forms its spreading lower branches, the trees thus create a more natural ambiance, resembling the sycamore stands along streams and in canyon bottoms. In the Santa Monica Mountains, you could see such a stand on a hike, say in Big Sycamore Canyon or Sycamore Creek campground!

The London plane tree is grown as a smaller and always upright tree. Its leaves are broader than long (only 5 to 10 centimeters in length), with only three shallow lobes and scalloped with broad teeth, and the stipules are not long persistent and not very leaf like. There are only two spherical fruit heads on the majority of inflorescences. This interspecific hybrid has a more formal look with a canopy that can be perfectly conical in outline, which is why it can be used as a very uniform street tree, and why it works well in formal alley landscapes. The bark tends to be drab and more olive and purple-gray than in *P. racemosa*, and flakes off in smaller pieces. The leaves and twigs of *Platanus x acerifolia* are more highly resistant to diseases than are those of *P. racemosa*, but neither requires regular pruning to keep them neat and healthy, unlike figs and eucalypts.

Sycamores grow rapidly and can live a very long time. Horticulturists have documented cultivated specimens of both the American and oriental plane trees living 400 years. The maximum diameter of *P. occidentalis* is listed as 3.5 meters, and individuals 50 meters tall have been recorded, making this the tallest indigenous deciduous tree species of temperate North America. In Southern California, well-watered specimens of our native species can achieve a height of 30 meters in less than a quarter of a century. The tallest giants have straight trunks and hard but relatively flexible wood, whereas California sycamore tends to have slightly leaning trunks and spreading branches. The term "plane" may refer to "timber" and the use for flexible lumber, although no plane tree has been really important for building material and more frequently was used for veneer (e.g., lacewood).

## Plant Sale Leftovers!

We missed out on some pre-sale advertising, so "we" are still holding plants that need to be sold & planted!!! Prices have been discounted to \$5.00 per one gallon container. Larger shrubs & trees are priced per species. Call Randi at 343-1078; she will let you know about picking them up. It is not too late. . . A warmish winter's day is a good time to be out in the garden and thankfully, it is still OK to plant natives. THANK YOU for supporting our chapter.

We have:

White Yarrow, White Alder, Indigo bush, Western and Sierra Columbine, various Manzanitas, Coyote Bush, Incense Cedar, Spice Bush, Bush Anemone, various Ceanothus, Redbud, Mountain Mahogany, Burgundy Desert Willow, Arizona Cypress, Bleeding Heart, various monkeyflowers, various buckwheats, Apache plume, Flannel Bush, Toyon, Rush, Utah Juniper, various penstemons, Pitcher sage, Blue Flax, Twinberry, Deer Bush, Broad Leaf Lupine, Oregon Grape, Bush mallow, Mountain Pennyroyal, Nine bark, Ponderosa and Gray Pine, Chokecherry, Canyon and Blue Oak, Coffeeberry, Golden and Pink currant, various sages, Yellow and Blue-eyed grass, White Hedge Nettle, Snowberry, California Bay.

Our Kern County CNPS website is at <http://www.cnps.org/chapters/kern/>

If you know of some sites we should include links to, please let us know. Or, if you have some pictures or information on your own home page that you would like to share, that would be great! We would like to start a "local links" section on our web page where Kern CNPS members can share their thoughts, pictures, trips, gardening experiences, or whatever with other members.

This newsletter and some past newsletters can be found there in PDF format.

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The mission of the California Native Plant Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to conserve them and their natural habitats through science, education, advocacy, horticulture and land stewardship.